

MONTIELTE

A HISTORY OF KILLARNEY AND

TURTLE MOUNTAIN

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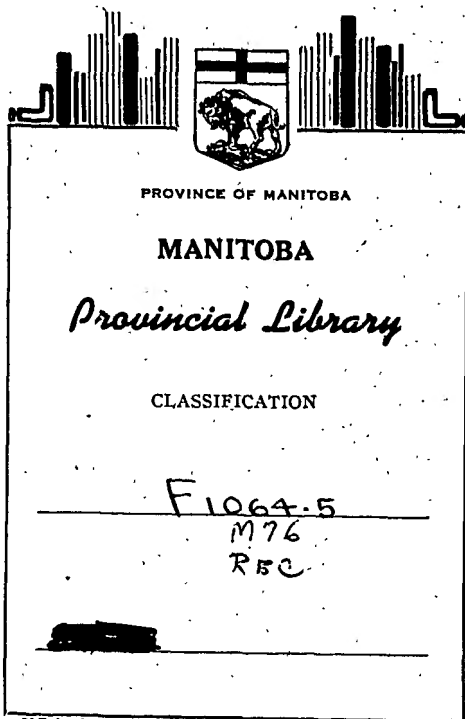
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A History of Killarney and Turtle Mountain



By George B. Monteith

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To
J. H. MONTEITH

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Introduction

Having been requested to write a short history of the municipality, I thought I would go a little farther afield. The Turtle Mountains extend from Rolla in North Dakota in the east to Deloraine in Manitoba in the west, taking in a strip about twenty miles wide. The reason they were called Turtle Mountains is that looking at them from a distance they look like a huge turtle. One-third is in Manitoba and two-thirds in North Dakota. The Peace Gardens are situated about the middle of the mountains to commemorate one hundred years of peace between Canada and the United States. The whole mountain is now a game preserve and great numbers of wild animals are there. There are a great number of small lakes in the mountain from which flow the Badger River, Stony and Jack Fish Creeks, Long River and the Pembina River. All these have deep valleys.

The land is rolling prairie. The town is situated on Section 35-2-17W. and on Section 2-3-17W. The larger portion of the town is on the south half of the section, homesteaded by John Williams, and the north half by George Gates. The north half of thirty-five was owned by Samuel Hossack. This was cut in two by a bay coming from Killarney Lake. The bay is just a few rods south of the correction line. On this is built a thirty-bed hospital. On the south of the bay the Roblin Government bought forty acres and started a Demonstration Farm, but this has been bought by the Fair Board and used now as a picnic ground and for the annual fair.

The lake is about three-and-a-half miles long and from a half to a mile wide and teeming with fish. On the south side of the lake is Hare Mountain and around the base are about forty summer cottages built at the foot and partly up on Hare Mountain. This is quite high and resembles a hare. In the park is a band pavilion and bathing houses opposite a fine sandy beach.

Number Three Highway comes into Killarney from the south, crossing Stony and Jack Fish Creeks and Long River and then out of Killarney, crossing a bridge, and around the lake between Hare Mountain and the lake and on to Boissevain and Deloraine up hill and down dale with magnificent views.

A History of Killarney and Turtle Mountain

Mr. Mayor, I want to congratulate your committee, the Fair Board, Hospital Board and the ladies for the wonderful reception you gave us old timers, for the fine parade, the fair and the banquet you gave us.

I intend to give you a history of Killarney and of the Municipality of Turtle Mountain. I have been assisted very much by Mr. Johnston the librarian in the provincial Parliament Buildings, by the University of Manitoba and by a lady of Winnipeg, formerly Miss Lena Bryan, now Mrs. Allison.

Forty-six years ago this August, I was in Ottawa. I went out to see the Experimental Farm. There I met a Mr. Morris, who gave me much information about Killarney district. He surveyed all the country, finishing in 1881. I had seen his map in the University Buildings in Winnipeg. He named the lake Oak Lake on account of a heavy growth of oak about two to two and a half feet through on the north side of the lake where your golf course is now. He also named Lake Max in the Turtle Moun-

tain, after his son, then a small boy in Ottawa.

There is also another map in the University Buildings, made by a surveyor named Kirk, who surveyed the country into Townships. He called the lake Hill Lake. Then the lake was afterwards called Killarney by one John Sidney O'Brien, who came from Killarney Lake in Ireland.

Mrs. Allison gave me much information about Wakopa. She, when a girl, was a brilliant student at the University of Manitoba, winning the highest honors and scholarships there.

I will now tell you about Wakopa. I got much information about Wakopa from Mr. Johnson, as well as from Mrs. Allison.

In the early days, a Frenchman named Lariviere came there as a fur trader. There was also a post of the Hudson Bay Co. fur traders there. Lariviere gathered a force of half breeds and they had a fight with the Hudson Bay Company and defeated the company men and drove them out. The name of the fight was called the Battle of

the Broken Wheel, a Red River cart having overturned and a wheel broken. The name Broken Wheel is the Indian name Wakopa. There was also an Indian burying ground built on posts about seven feet high the coffins being made of four inch peeled poles and hung about with bow and arrow and tomahawk and food kept constantly there to help the Indians to the Happy Hunting ground.

Mrs. Allison's story was about her three uncles Joseph, William and George Harrison, and her mother, Mary. They built a saw mill and grist mill at Wakopa. After the railroad came to Killarney in 1885, Joseph went over to Rolla, North Dakota and built and operated a grist mill there. William came to Killarney and built an elevator there. He married a Killarney girl and A. W. Harrison is their son. He is an M. P. representing the rural constituency of Killarney. After a grist mill was built in Killarney, the Harrisons moved their Wakopa mill to Holmfield, which is still being operated by them.

The elevator operated by William was sold to the Grain Growers Grain Company and operated by W. J. Schnarr of Killarney for a number of years.

Mrs. Allison's mother married Peter Bryan, and still lives in Killarney. She is 88 years old.

The next place I will mention is the post office of Smith Hill. Joe Smith took up a homestead there. On the north west corner of his quarter was a large sandhill. So the post was called Smith Hill. It was not on his farm but on the other side of the road a short distance east, where there was a store kept by a man named Hunter. We used to get our mail there. Smith came in the summer with two horses, some lumber, two or three carpenters and a load of furniture and built a cottage and a stable, and then his wife came. He never did any work, but every evening took his horses out, got on horse back, first placing a barrel, pulled out a gun and could hit the bull's eye every time. I have seen him do this. Finally two men came around enquiring for him. He was gone. His wife said she did not know where he was. They said they had a warrent for him. They stayed about a month watching night and day, watching the mail. Then one morning his wife was gone. A short time after, one of the women got a letter from her. There had been a big hold up in

Montana; a train carrying the money for the miners was held up. A sheriff and posse pursued the robbers; got them surrounded in the hills. Joe Smith was one of the robbers and is killed.

Dunrea is the next town I will mention. It was built partly on Adam Dunlop's farm and partly on John Rea's farm. Dunrea was named after both of them.

Next in line is Ninette, where the sanitorium is built. John Yellowless and Harry Lees came to me to get them a charter for a company to be called the Pelican Lake Navigation and Steamship Co. They wanted to have power to dig canals between Pelican Lake, Lorne, Louise and Rock Lake, to build wharves, elevators, telegraph lines, summer hotels and cottages as well as steamboats. They got it. Capital stock was to be \$1,000.00 divided into forty shares of \$25.00 each. They did build a large boat, capable of carrying one hundred passengers and a couple of cottages.

The next charter I got out was a charter to be called the Killarney Lakeside Park Company. They bought the Park at the lake, bought the big boat from the Ninette Company, brought it to Killarney

Lake, bought a merry-go-round and a bowling alley and operated it for a number of years.

Further about Killarney the railroad came in 1885. The first stores were by T. J. Lawlor on the north west corner of main street, one by Frank Rollins on the north east end of the bay. Robert Rollins bought the one from Frank and also the one from Hunter at Smith Hill and moved them up town and built a substantial store on the west side of main street. Frank Rollins built and operated a hotel on the north-east corner of main street.

The next big thing was the Southern Manitoba Agricultural and Arts Association. The town operated a four-day fair and races for a number of years.

Killarney had professional baseball teams for three years. The catcher was Jess Tripp. He married Dolly Williams of Killarney. He studied to be a druggist and soon was elected as Liberal member for Oxbow district.

The halfbreed settlement with the government was as follows: each breed living at the date of the settlement was that he or she was to get title to two hundred and forty acres of land, where he liked



to locate it. Very few applied. The Government fixed a date for them to apply and sent a commissioner named McKenna. Three thousand came to Killarney and remained a month, making application for permits to locate land. They built a large platform and danced every night until twelve o'clock. Also, a man came from Winnipeg with a merry-go-round and other attractions. Also a number of Jews and Italians came and built booths and sold them cheap jewellery and colored clothing. The breeds as soon as they got their script sold it to script buyers for \$300.00 and proceeded to spend it on liquor and cheap goods.

The Bank of Hamilton was broken into one night, the vault being blown open and the bank looted. They never caught the thieves.

Then Killarney had a great Orange Demonstration. They came from all over the province. There were twelve thousand Orangemen and their wives present.

Now, I will tell you of some of the great men who lived at Killarney and made their home at Killarney.

First was Robert Douglas, who came out from Scotland and

took a homestead near Wakopa. There were two boys born there, one was named Carstairs, he was four years old, and the other Robert Douglas went back to Scotland. He left his wife in Killarney for a year. My two sisters took turns staying with her. Carstairs was appointed Governor of the Island of Malta and on coming home a few months ago, was decorated by the King. He was given the title of Sir Carstairs. The younger was elected as a labor candidate in the Attle government.

The next was Dr. Gordon, who wrote a number of books under the name of Ralph Connor. He preached at Killarney.

J. W. S. Lowry preached at Killarney five years. He took a homestead, built a house and stable and sent to Ireland for his sister to come and keep house for him. My sister and I went to call on them. He said we were the first callers. About nine o'clock, Mary put on a little pot and set it on the table and we dipped as much as we wanted. That was our lunch. It was a pot of porridge.

Then there was Dr. Stewart, afterwards a professor in Wesley College. He preached in Killarney. After him Doctor Riddell was a

preacher in Killarney. He was principal of Wesley College

Mr. and Mrs. Dafoe lived in Killarney. J. W. Dafoe, the editor of the Winnipeg Free Press, who held numerous government commissions probably the greatest editor that Canada ever produced, was their son.

Another man of importance was Finlay Young. He was speaker of the Legislature in Winnipeg and afterwards Senator at Ottawa.

Jim McNaughton lived in Killarney. He was lumber man and hardware man and built the first halls in Killarney. He went to Alberta and was elected to the Alberta legislature.

There was a long distance runner named March who was going through the Province challenging anyone to race him with a horse for ten miles. Your Mayor took him up. The terms were: he would bet \$50.00 he could beat a horse and buggy with two men in it, no whip to be used. Vic David took him up. Each put up their \$50.00. Vic and his brother Fred started even. Vic pulled in behind and kept about eight or ten feet behind. If March spurred, they did the same. They went around the track twenty times and in the home stretch,

Vic pulled out and passed him.

Killarney always has been noted for its pure bred horses and cattle. Joseph Washington was perhaps the best of them all. His son is carrying on, taking high honors in Brandon this year.

Mention should be made of Bob Watson who shipped many car loads to Saskatchewan and going to Ontario for pure bred horses.

Jack Saunders was a many-sided man breeder of cattle a poultry and implement man and one of the best Auctioneers in Manitoba.

We must not forget Mrs. Percy Rollins who for years was Secretary-Treasurer of Turtle Mountain Municipality.

Killarney had a ladies' band trained by bandmaster Jos Parkes. they travelled everywhere and became quite famous. He eventually went overseas when the first war was on, taking a number of bands men with him.

Another man worth mentioning was one J. M. George. During the depression the Canadian National Railway made an application to have the Greenway-Wakopa-Delorsaine Railway abandoned. The residents engaged George to fight them. Ottawa appointed a commission to hear the case. The writer

was present. They sat at Lena. George had a number of witnesses and put up such a strong argument that the application was defeated. George is now Surrogate and County Court Judge for Killarney district.

Another Killarney boy is Judge Cecil Philp. He is now Senior County Judge in Winnipeg.

And last but not least, we must remember the seventy men whose names are on the monument in front of the Town hall, who died for their town and country.

Such is the History of Killarney and district; what a history! No other ~~city~~ ^{town} in Manitoba can produce a history such as this. May she ever continue to grow and prosper.



